



Professor Ken Jameson, Principal Investigator
1645 Campus Center Dr., Rm. 308
Salt Lake City, UT 84112-9300
Ph: 801-581-4578; Fax: 801-585-5649
jameson@economics.utah.edu

Professor Jerry Root, Chair, International Studies Board
195 S. Central Campus Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0511
Ph: 801-587-9285; Fax: 801-585-3581
jerry.root@utah.edu

ABSTRACT, PUBLIC SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP: UNITING UTAH'S K-12 AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATORS TO ENHANCE LATIN AMERICAN AREA STUDIES

In the last decade, as the Hispanic population in Utah increased 138.3%, the K-12 system was unable to modify its curriculum fast enough to meet the challenges of this demographic shift. This project responds to this challenge by creating a group with the knowledge base to develop K-12 curriculum modules focused on Latin America. The University of Utah's Latin American Studies Program, Departments of Economics and Languages and Literature, and College of Education will join with K-12 educators and the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) to raise the quality of Latin American Area Studies and Spanish curricula available to Utah's K-12 students. This collaboration will result not only in curriculum change, but also in better communication between the University and the public school system. For four weeks in Ecuador, two University faculty, three University students-future teachers, and twelve K-12 teachers will study the central issues facing Latin America: dollarization of the economy, threats to the environment, the role of indigenous peoples, outmigration, and Spanish language teaching.

The main goal of this Group Project Abroad in Ecuador is to enhance Latin American Area Studies curriculum and Spanish teaching in Utah through:

1. Providing K-12 teachers with the opportunity to experience firsthand the vibrant society of Ecuador. Program participants will become "trainers of trainers," able to instruct other K-12 teachers in different aspects of Latin American culture and the Spanish language. These "trainers of trainers" will educate others at teacher development workshops held throughout the state, thus disseminating the information gleaned in Ecuador to a larger K-12 teacher population. With their knowledge of Latin American studies, and their expertise in education, these "trainers of trainers" will also establish curriculum modules for the K-12 and University levels.

2. Responding to Latin American Area Studies curricular needs at both the K-12 and the University levels. After curricular needs are established by the joint group of U of U professors and K-12 instructors, the dissemination of Latin American Area Studies curriculum will occur at meetings geared towards K-12 educators. In Ecuador, program participants will establish a Latin American Area Studies module focused on economics, political science, history, and Spanish language appropriate for K-12 students. This curriculum module will be placed on the USOE website for all K-12 teachers to access. The U of U will act as a resource center for Latin American curriculum and social/cultural issues by continuing to assist with K-12 curriculum development and by hosting seminars and workshops for K-12 teachers.

3. Strengthening the Spanish-speaking abilities of the group members. The four-week Spanish immersion experience in Ecuador will provide numerous opportunities for the group members to practice both their existing and newly acquired Spanish language skills. By improving their Spanish-speaking abilities, program participants will better serve the needs of the Hispanic students in their classes, schools, and districts and will comprehend the intricate and important link between language and culture as it pertains to the Hispanic population.

This project ensures that education in Utah reflect the changes evident in the globalized 21st century. Now, more than ever, Area Studies and World History are our history. Our partnership will transform isolation and ignorance into global understanding and responsibility.